

**Minutes of Co-operatives Council of Australia
meeting held by teleconference Monday 4th February 2008**

Participants: Chris Enright (Meeting Chairman); David Griffiths; Helen McCall; David Osgood; Tony O'Shea; Trevor Schmidt; Jim Sneesby; Jim Howard and Peter Wells

Minutes - Noted David Osgood was nominated to write letter to government not David G.

ICA Membership – concerns expressed that CCA Membership of ICA would be totally dependant on receiving designated membership funding from co-operatives with financial capacity to assist. Opined that limited benefits would flow to small co-operatives with a considerable gap between ICA activities and a large number of members of state federations. Questions also raised about the relative financial position of co-operatives in Australia compared with corporate sector and economy as whole.

Agreed action:

- State federations to initiate a census to establish the number of members of each member
- Trent Bartlett to be requested update Members on where he believes the ICA sits in terms of fostering/assisting admission of the CCA

Co-operatives legislation WA - reported that a "White Bill" was before the WA parliament for debate in early 2008. Bill had been accepted as core consistent by the National Working party.

Agreed Action:

- Peter Wells to email website details access WA Bill

Other state legislation – no known progress with template legislation. Apparently stalled with Brian Given's position yet to be filled on a permanent basis.

Agreed Action:

- David Osgood to draft letter to NSW Minister re need to progress template legislation

Retail Workshop – reported that financial difficulties encountered with getting key man from UK for the project resulting in needing to go back to the drawing board. Issue talked out.

Agreed Action:

- Federations to gather and send to Helen McCall state based data on who retail co-operatives use to source both food and hardware lines
- Helen McCall to collate, then approach IGA for Workshop sponsorship funding

ICA Global 300 CEO Conference – view was very few members have the resources to attend this conference

Agreed Action:

- Federations will assist with electronic circulation of details when available and let individual members decide level of interest

Co-operative College Manchester UK – discussion took place on how best to promote services of the Co-operative College in Australia so they did not “cherry pick” the market and cause problems with state bodies losing the ability to leverage education and training programs off support from the larger members. Jim Howard and David Osgood expressed a like position. Tony O’Shea provided background to CFV’s work with the College over the last 3 plus years, advising that CFV had entered into an agreement with the College to recover costs and establish a future income stream. Peter Wells reported that the Co-operatives WA Membership and Education Committee was of the view the College should roll out its program with the CCA as their “partner” so there is coordination across Australia with a unified profile of the movement. It was accepted by WA that if Graham Charles was being positioned to present the College’s program that was not an issue with Graham/CFV entitled to a fair financial reward. However in general the WA position was that it assisted the College in approaching Members on the basis that Co-ops WA would be the College’s local partner and would be able to leverage off any interest and funding coming from our larger members. It was agreed that some form of protocol was needed to cover off on the role and interests of the respective parties including the role of Graham Charles as the UK material was focused 100% on UK personnel delivering the programs. It was acknowledged that the CCA can contract with the College if that was required with CFV still able to protect and gain from its initiative.

Agreed Action:

- CFV to circulate suggestions for a protocol along the lines discussed
- Graham Charles to provide comment on the focus on UK presenters in the draft brochure sent to state federations for comment
- Matter to be progressed off line to provide individual and/or collective feedback to Chris Cooper

Demutualisation – draft paper from David Griffiths/Helen McCall discussed. Agreed to develop into a more advanced draft opposition statement stopping short of the comments in the final paragraph about the CCA being commissioned to provide advice on certain matters. Once a position statement was settled consideration would then be given to how the CCA view was communicated.

Agreed Action:

- David G and Helen McCall to prepare an advanced draft.

Australia 2020 Summit at Parliament House on 19 and 20 April – Chris Enright requested to approach Trent Bartlett and encourage him to seriously consider nominating for the Summit as all Federations believed he could have meaningful input into proceedings based on his strong understanding of the contribution co-operative businesses can make to the economy.

Agreed Action:

- Chris Enright to speak with Trent Bartlett

Co-op promotional - DVD or similar – need for DVD type promotional material agreed but funding issue to be overcome. Suggestion made could link with ICA membership funding or as an alternative to taking out ICA membership.

Agreed Action:

- Link to ICA membership discussion with Trent Bartlett
- David O to make enquiries about likely cost

Top 100 Australian Co-ops and mutuals – general agreement that profile of co-operative business model needed to be boosted with top 100 lists one avenue to get attention. Opined that CCA should not be too “precious” about the list or the information if sourced from the public record. Comment made that people will soon speak up to have the record put straight. WA view was a data base approach be adopted with as many co-operative type businesses captured in a way that allows reporting at multiple levels.

Agreed Action:

- David G to revise current list and re-issue for further input and discussion

Co-op Events 2008

Living Co-operatively Symposium in Sydney on 13 & 14 February

Free Global Co-op Connections Seminar Sydney February 18

WA Annual Conference October 16th 2008

SA conference tentatively October 17th but to be confirmed

Indian Delegation due in NSW shortly

Chinese delegation in March

Agreed Action:

- Helen McCall to circulate details of Indian and Chinese visitors when to hand

State Federation general updates – Covered elsewhere in agenda

Other Business

Accounting standards - Loss Absorption Approach to defining equity – Noted email from Helen McCall 31 Jan with discussion paper attached. No action on paper itself but discussion took place on prospects of having legislative change to remove the “put option” Members currently have under the core consistent legislation.

Agreed Action:

- Jim Howard to look into NZ approach for possible application in Australia
- Representations to be made to National Working Party and to WA government if prospects of change are sufficiently encouraging

Changes at NSW Registry – Reported as an information item that NSW Federation access to government funding assistance would be more difficult in the future with the Registry no longer having the ability to approve grant application. Funding decisions now resided in the department of Commerce.

David Osgood's retirement – Noted that David O would be retiring on 30 June 2008.

Date of next Teleconference – First half April with Queensland to schedule and to host.

Closure – Meeting closed at noon NSW/Vic daylight saving time.